2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

occupations, 32 per cent are service personnel and skilled workers, 27 per cent are unskilled and semi-skilled labourers and 14 per cent are engaged in agriculture. Just over two-thirds of the total are employed outside the village. The majority of these, as in Farrug, work in the Grand Harbour industrial area. Those who work in the village are for the most part self-employed. They are farmers, shopkeepers, blacksmiths and carpenters.

In Table No. 1 I have compared the various occupational classes in Kortin and Farrug to each other and to the national figures.

III

Most villages look very much alike. Their magnificent baroque churches provide a startling contrast to the low, flat-roofed houses grouped tightly around them. As the parish church towers over the village, so it dominates it socially, for the church is in every sense the centre around which the life of the village revolves. In front of the church there is usually a large square, the *misrah* or *pjazza*, which is the social centre of the village. Various village clubs and lay societies, as well as the police station, are situated on the *pjazza*, or just off it, as are the principal wine shops, the government dispensary and the finest houses of the village. As the square is usually the terminal point of the local bus line, it is the point at which most people enter and leave the village. It is also the stage on which the principal events of village life take place: the annual feast, or *festa*, of the patron saint, the many religious processions and the occasional political rallies. On Sundays, and especially during the long summer evenings, the square teems with groups of men, who sit about on steps and benches, talking and arguing for hours on end. During weekday mornings, it belongs to the old men of the village, now freed by government old age pensions from the backbreaking toil in the fields that was the lot of their forefathers.

Each village is first and foremost a community of neighbours. Even the smallest of them have distinct residential groups, the members of which are in closer contact with each other than with people living in other parts of the village. This is, of course, particularly true of the larger villages. But even in Farrug, a village of about 1,400, the extremities of the village and the various streets and alleys form separate neighbourhoods. The many little shops

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346 794 [815] set out to raise the extra £2,000 required. One of the fund-raisers at the time was young Manwel, the father of Dr. Farrugia, who had then just begun to teach in the village school. The reconstruction of the old church was finally completed in 1913.

794 578 Sur Vinċenz gradually dropped out of village activities. Many people blamed him for the trouble in the community. In 1912 he refused to allow the organizers of the festa to anchor one of the major street decorations in its customary position against his house. This action created more hostility towards him, and shortly after the festa a bomb was thrown through his cellar window. During the next six weeks he and his close relatives received several threatening letters, and one night the front of his house was smeared with red paint. But the rivalry between the factions gradually died out, and today there is no trace of it left. The old [881] men of Kortin who now spend their days in the shade of the huge façade of the church, and their evenings on its cool steps, remember the struggle clearly, for they were all deeply involved in it. As they look back to the events of sixty years ago, they often remark with wry smiles that the village was then a very lively place.

346 578 794 This incident was exceptional because of the immense cost to the village in money and labour that the construction of the new church involved. Now that church-building is no longer in vogue, new works usually take the form of decorations, such as new paintings or candlesticks. These do not generally arouse strong feelings, since all additions to the beauty and wealth of the church are normally welcome. A wise priest, however, tries to ensure that there is general agreement about them. It sometimes happens that he forgets, or underestimates, the proprietary interest of his parishioners in their church. When this occurs, there is usually trouble.

346 578 793 794 Some years ago, the parish priest of Farrug proposed to regild the chancel. His parishioners welcomed the idea, and contributed generously. But when the work was finally completed and the scaffolding removed, his parishioners were shocked to find that he had placed his personal coat of arms high over the chancel. He was the first priest in the history of the parish to have put his coat of arms inside their church; moreover, he had done so without their consent. There was great indignation, but the arms remained there. A year later he was promoted to a larger parish, and left